



Afternoon Alert - Thursday, February 15, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK and TV Asahi gave led with reports on the mass school shooting in Florida in which at least 17 students were killed. All other networks also reported on the shooting. NTV led with a report on a press conference held by the Japanese Olympians who won medals on Wednesday. Fuji TV gave top play to a report that three people, including a Japan Post employee, were arrested for accepting bribes from a direct mail agency.

ECONOMY

Aso says next U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue likely to be held in April or later

NHK reported on its website that Deputy Prime Minister Aso said during a Lower House Budget Committee meeting today that he agreed with Vice President Pence during his visit to Japan that the two nations will make arrangements to hold the next session of the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue in April or later. Aso reportedly explained that during their meeting in Tokyo, he and the Vice President exchanged views on the economic dialogue. Aso was quoted as saying today: "We are hoping to hold the dialogue in April but the U.S. side said May or June. Although I can't tell you the exact timing, we have agreed to continue our dialogue."

- [Japan, U.S., EU mull filing joint WTO complaint against China on forced technology transfer](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Editorial: Japan must update its bilateral EPAs for 21st-century trade](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Vietnam smart town draws Japan Inc.'s big names](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Expert says stolen NEM being traded on dark web](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Virtual currencies used not as money, but as target for speculative trading](#) (The Japan News)

INTERNATIONAL

Vice President Pence on Kim Yo Jong encounter

Fuji TV reported at noon that Vice President Pence disclosed during an interview with news site Axios held on Wednesday in Washington that he did not avoid Kim Yo Jong, the sister of the North Korean leader, at the opening ceremony for the winter Olympics but ignored her. The Vice President reportedly explained that he ignored her because it is not appropriate to give any consideration to North Korea and that he wanted his intentional disregard to send a message. The Vice President was quoted as saying: "North Korea must completely, verifiably, and permanently abandon its nuclear weapons program and ballistic missile program. When that commences, then and only then can we consider any change in posture by the United States." While noting that the Vice President has made remarks that could be taken as being positive toward talks with North Korea, the network said he expressed the view that it would be difficult to hold substantive talks with North Korea at this time.

- [Gist of Japan-U.S. summit talks by phone](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abe cautions Moon on visit to North Korea, reveals conversation with DPRK's Kim Yong Nam](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan, Norway agree to combat N. Korea's nuclear program](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Aisawa replaces Komura as head of parliamentary group for Japan-Russia friendship](#) (Mainichi)
- [Cartoon: Winter Olympics](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Feb. 14, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of interpellations at Lower House Budget Committee, Feb. 14](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Editorial: LDP factions abuzz ahead of party race](#) (The Japan Times)

OPINION POLLS

- [More pollees want para 2 of Art. 9 retained than deleted, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Public acceptance of Abe's proposal on revising Article 9 still insufficient, Kyodo News poll](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Kyodo News opinion poll & results from Tokyo Shimbun](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [76% approve of PM Abe's visit to South Korea, 66% say Seoul untrustworthy, Sankei-FNN poll](#) (Sankei)
- [Opinion poll & results from Sankei Shimbun](#) (Sankei)
- [Opinion poll & results from Yomiuri Shimbun](#) (Yomiuri)

SOCIETY

Path to Gold – Japanese women's speed skating

"NHK Special" reported on team pursuit speed skating, saying expectations are high for the Japanese women's team to win a gold medal at the PyeongChang Olympics. The network said the Japanese team has broken several world records in World Cup events this season, adding that while all the members of the Dutch team, Japan's rival, are ranked among the top five in the world, the only member of the Japanese team who is even among the top ten is Miho Takagi. The Japanese

team successfully improved their performance by aligning themselves to minimize air resistance and quickly switching lead skaters under the guidance of their new coach from the Netherlands.

